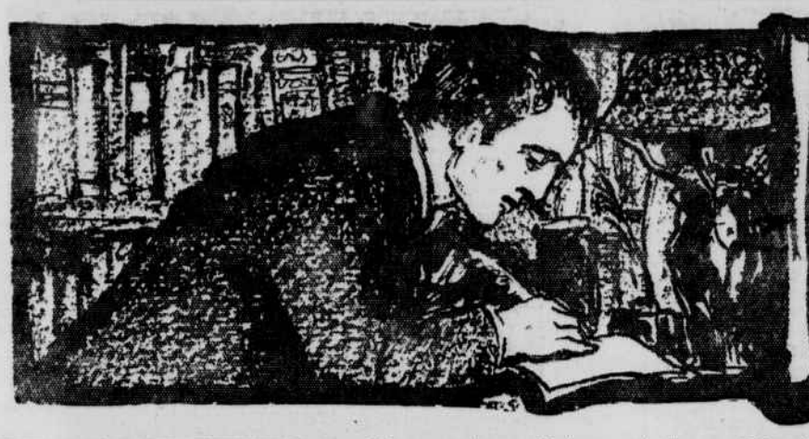


BOOKS

REVIEWS OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS WITH NEWS AND VIEWS OF AUTHORS

Soundings
In the Sea of Ink

Read With the Children.

TRY this little song on your saxophone. A tune will come of itself. The words were written by a girl of nine and they were not rewritten by anybody else.

LITTLE CHILDREN.
BY CORNELIA ERNST.

Oh! Little children are so glad,
When there is Mother to be had.
It is a very lonesome day
When Mother has gone far away
There's nothing but tears with which to play
That day. That day.

To be Father is a gruesome task
Of merry youngsters growing fast.
Oh! it is a happy day
When Father is at home to play.
That day! That day.

That is text enough for a Children's Book Week sermon and this one will be very short. In the particular home where this poem blossomed, reading aloud, by the parents or by the children themselves, is as natural as eating. It isn't a task, it's a delight.

The contagion of happiness—that is the secret of teaching children to read. If reading is related to the best hours it will take on something of their glory. But we can give away only that which we possess. And the father and mother who want to unlock the treasures of literature for a family must find the key for themselves.

* * *

The Stevenson That Never Grew Up.

IT happens—no, I think it had to be that way—that Children's Book Week opens on Stevenson's birthday. One of the best chapters of Sidney Colvin's "Memories and Notes of Persons and Places: 1852-1912" (Scribner's) is on R. L. S. It says little of his childhood or of his rhymes and stories for children. But there is a defence of some of his ways which the hopelessly grown-up looked upon as childish:

"Given a nature differing sufficiently from the average, perhaps the real affectation would be that it should force itself to preserve an average outside to the world. Stevenson's uncut hair came originally from the fear of catching cold. His shabby clothes came partly from lack of cash, partly from lack of care, partly from a hankering after social experiment and adventure and a dislike of being identified with any special class or caste. Certainly conventional and respectable attire, when by exception he wore it, did not in those days sit him well. Going with me one day from Hampstead to the Royal Academy Exhibition, he thought such attire would be expected of him and looked out a black frock coat and tall hat, which he had once worn at a wedding. I can see now the odd figure he made as he walked with me in that unwonted garb down Regent street and along Piccadilly. True, he carried his tall hat not on his head, but in his hand, because it chafed him. Also, being fresh from an enthusiastic study of the prosody of Milton, he kept declaiming to me with rapturous comments as we walked the lines and cadences which chiefly haunted him:

His wrath
Burned after them to the bottomless pit.

* * *

Like Teneriffe or Atlas, unremoved—

* * *

All night the dreadless angel, unpursued—

* * *

Oh! how comely it is and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long opprest!

And, incidentally, we commend this passage to W. L. George, who scorns poetry as a foolish method of escape from the difficulties of prose. R. L. S. appears by general consent to have braved those difficulties pretty successfully. And he was content to sit at the feet of Milton—who wrote some not wholly despicable prose himself between the childishness of "Il Penseroso" and the senility of "Paradise Lost" and "Samson Agonistes."

* * *

American Folk Songs.

ALICE CORBIN HENDERSON asserts in her introduction to "Songs of the Cowboys" (Houghton Mifflin) that such poetry is created and enjoyed by a public that knows not bookstores. A certain cowboy wrote or collected and took to a printer a bunch of songs of the plains and sold enough copies to set himself up in business. The profits "would have made any Eastern poet jealous." And they came not from the ordinary book buying public, but from the people that go to round-ups and fairs.

That was the way the present volume began. The cowpuncher poet, N. Howard Thorpe, wrote five of the first lot. He has written more since and rounded up enough others to make a hundred. And his laconic notes on some of them are packed with history. The first is of "Bucking Bronco," by Belle Star:

"Written about 1878. Song has been expurgated by me. The author was a member of a notorious gang of outlaws, but a very big-hearted woman. I knew her well."

"Buckskin Joe: Author unknown. First heard this recited by a medicine vender in Waco, Texas, on the public square."

"Little Adobe Casa: Written in the spring of 1887 and sung in the cow camps by the author, who had a good voice. While Beasley was working for me I heard him sing the song. There's a story about a nugget of gold, Henry Heap (the bank watchman in El Paso) and Tom Beasley that some of you old-timers may recall, but I can't write it here. Remember?"

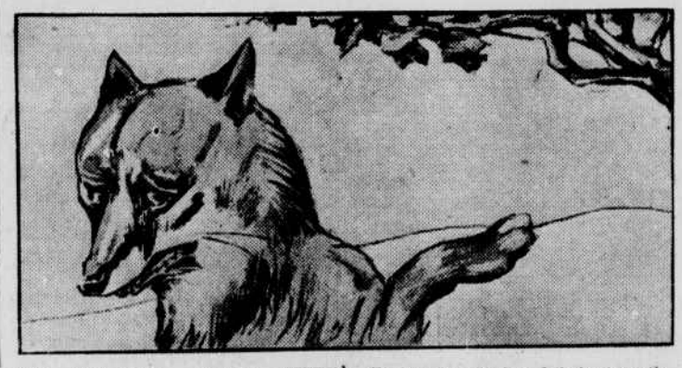
The notable thing about these editorial remarks is that they nearly all refer to "hearing" the poems recited or sung. That's what lyric poetry is for, as an "eye-minded" generation may sometimes forget.

The cowboy spends many a night out under the stars, where David tended his sheep. And psalms rise in his heart also. He thinks of heaven and of the last day, when

The mortal grass is springing up
To meet the judgment sun.

An unknown author wrote that, but in the words of Thorpe "my hat off to him, whoever he may be." There may be a technical difference between plain song and song of the plains, but at times their spirit harmonizes.

Aesop Plus Oliver Herford



THE HERFORD ÆSOP: FIFTY FABLES IN VERSE. By Oliver Herford. Illustrated by the author. Ginn & Co.

THE Oliver Herford habit is an insidious, dangerous thing. It creeps on its victim unawares, appearing to be a mere indulgence, a creature compounded of laughs, of chuckles, a whimsie, too slight for power, claiming but a moment or two in the whirl of busy days.

But this fragile, smiling presence is only a part of its lure. Underneath the velvet mitten are claws of steel. Once fixed on you, you cannot shake it off. It demands more and more of you, it insists on being yielded to, it encroaches on your precious leisure, finally even on the time you should give to the serious affairs of life. In the end you won't be able to get along without it. You must have your Oliver Herford though magnates are kept waiting in your outer office, though cabinets fall or golf clubs call. Deprived of the thing, you sink into a green and yellow melancholy, become hateful to your friends and to yourself, foreswear the sane joys of existence, droop and wither.

The worst of acquiring the habit is that it is so difficult to get enough of the Oliver Herford. Sometimes for long, long months there will be none obtainable. Then a little turns up, to be eagerly snatched at by the habitues, to be lightly flavored by new victims, who little guess the peril they run. Again it will be impossible to get more, and only those who have had to go without their Oliver realize what that means of dejection and frenzy.

At the present moment a small bit is obtainable, and we warn all who are under the dangerous charm to hurry out and get their share. It goes by the name of "The Herford Aesop," and though slim it holds a round fifty fables, each with one or more drawings of the true Herfordian mark. Aesop and Herford are brothers under their skin. Their minds go along together, and each helps and amplifies the other. Aesop brings his bit of wisdom, Herford his rainbow sparkle, his fall of words, like drops of silver water. You read, you smile, you are content. So and not otherwise would Aesop have put his thoughts into English, had he had the good fortune to have been born an Anglo-Saxon and in our day. Herford addicts need not fear that they will lose the true note because another name is associated with his on the cover which holds the treasure they seek.

Perhaps a little apt quotation will make the point clear. Take this:

THE MAN AND THE LION.

A Lion and a Man, as they
Were walking in a park one day,
Exchanging stories of their strength
And deeds of valor, came at length
Upon the statue of a Man
Slaying a Lion. Then began
A wrangle. Said the Man, "I call
That true to nature." "Not at all!"
The Lion roared. "You think it true
Because it shows Man's point of view.
If it were mine, the Man would not
Be seen!" Exclaimed the other, "What!
No Man at all?" "Oh, yes," replied
The Lion, "he would be *inside!*"

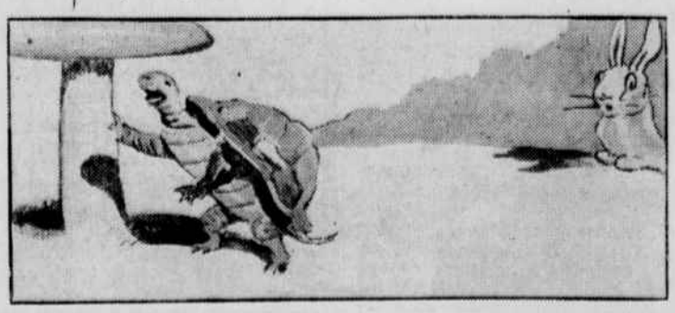
There are two drawings with this, and one especially, of the lion sculping, is not to be missed. Herford is particularly good at lions, for that matter, and as many of the fables are good at them, too, we meet a number of the engaging beasts; perhaps the most winning being he who, with a monocle raised to one eye, coldly surveys a sprightly fox, who, having seen his majesty several times, has lost his early awe, and finally "showed not the slightest trace of fear, but bold as anything walked up and said, 'Good morning, King!'" The foxes, for that matter, are as delightful as the lions. You remember The Fox and the Grapes fable, of course, but you never saw him until now. Here he is, his paw waved in denial, his countenance expressive of mingled disgust and pain, a perfect picture of renunciation. The amount of expression Herford manages to give his animals' faces is a constant joy and one of the secrets of his clutch upon us. Take his Tortoise, the one that beats the Hare in the immortal race, and observe the speaking profile of the creature, full of sly triumph and conscious power. No merely natural tortoise could ever look like that, yet Herford's tortoise is absolutely tortoise for all his added grace.

Space calls for mercy, and we must stop. But not without one more quotation, a fragment merely. The lines are those concluding the fable of The Goose that Laid the Golden Egg, when her owner, thinking to get hold of all the gold at once:

Killed her and found to his chagrin
Just flesh and feathers, bones and skin,
And other things, no earthly use
To any one, except a goose.

After all, it pays to be a Herford addict, whatever the cost. But there ought to be more of him, a great deal more, and a great deal oftener. There should be spring, summer, fall and winter stocks obtainable, and still more, some for all the phases of the moon, for rainy spells, for fireside days—however, the true Herford lover can always go back and dig up the old treasures and find them good, and laugh afresh at verse and drawing, for with Herford the bouquet lasts. . . . if that phrase means anything these days.

HILDEGARDE HAWTHORNE.



Lady Astor Sits Among Laborites

POLITICAL PROFILES FROM BRITISH PUBLIC LIFE. By Herbert Sidebotham. Houghton Mifflin Company.

ONE of the signs of the swing back from war time and its predominant interest in military affairs and personages is to be found in the increasing number of volumes devoted to sketches of political leaders here and abroad. The gentleman with a duster in Downing Street has stirred up something more palpable than particles of dirt as two volumes patterned on his sketches and concerning American statesmen already bear witness.

Unconsciously, no doubt, Mr. Sidebotham selected a very apt title for the eighteen definite personal sketches he has incorporated in his book, for most of them are very one sided, as a profile invariably is. Written from the viewpoint of the parliamentary reporter of the London *Times* and originally for that paper, they are overladen with political party references that must be decidedly hazy to the average American reader. The sketch of Lord Grey of Fallodon appears very sound and just, at this distance, particularly in the phrase "all Lord Grey's political life has been the expression not of ambitions nor even of views so much as of character." Of Lloyd George he says in a rambling attempt at a picture of the Premier, "He is as often the victim of his own charm as the exploiter of it." Again: "Mr. Lloyd George has the quickest mind in politics, but it is impatient of detail, incapable of avoiding a short cut and prone to the skimble skamble when he is not interested." Yet Mr. Sidebotham calls the Premier "the greatest natural genius for politics in our history."

To Lady Astor Mr. Sidebotham devotes nine pages of text and although he declares as the first woman member of the House of Commons Lady Astor "has already won a place in history, her place in the House itself is less certain." It will surprise most American readers, doubtless, that Lady Astor sits among the labor members in the House "somewhat vagrantly but usually under the lee of the portly Mr. Will Thorne." He says further: "She has adopted a kind of parliamentary uniform, consisting of a dark blue skirt, a white blouse and white gloves, which she often wears about her wrists, leaving her hands bare, the better to handle papers. . . . Her voice is, in its upper notes, a little harsh, has one or two good deep notes, but no intermediate tones. There are faint traces of an American accent, and dropped final g's, like flies in amber, show that she must have entered English society about twenty years ago, when the smart set boycotted this letter . . . There is sometimes an original or graphic turn or phrase, and she is good at a retort. Her subjects are the drink question and everything that concerns the family life."

W. B. McCORMICK.

A Great American Architect

DANIEL H. BURNHAM, ARCHITECT, PLANNER OF CITIES. By Charles Moore. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Reviewed by THOMAS HASTINGS.

MR. BURNHAM'S many friends are to be congratulated that a man of Mr. Moore's ability and close affiliation with Mr. Burnham for so many years has given the time and serious thought to write so complete a biography. A very distinguished man is made more distinguished by his biographer, whose work is so well done, so beautifully illustrated with portraits of Mr. Burnham, his ancestors and co-workers, with reproductions of his designs in color, as well as in black and white, all most beautifully presented. The book indeed might have been called "The Life of Daniel H. Burnham and His Times." It is really a splendid contribution to the art literature of this age. Mr. Burnham was indeed a modern American architect. His executive and administrative ability, his unselfishness and devotion to the architecture of the country endeared him to a large circle of painters, sculptors and architects. He had an unusual gift of surrounding himself with young men of artistic ability and a very fine appreciation of good work, and was always ready to give credit where it belonged. For seven years I was associated with Mr. Burnham and Mr. Moore as a member of the Commission of Fine Arts in Washington. It was here evident that Mr. Moore and of real character, a man whose presence always commanded respect; he was most skilful with men of affairs, with committees or directorates in bringing about action. Mr. Burnham practically was the architect of are Columbian Exposition. Mr. Moore in his preface says that in this great undertaking the one man who from the beginning realized the great possibilities the fair offered for the encouragement of fine arts in America was Daniel H. Burnham. He selected the artists, induced them to undertake the work as a public service, secured to each a full opportunity of experience, maintained harmony among them and fought their battles with committees and contractors.

From Zorn's Portrait of Daniel H. Burnham.

A man with so wide an experience covering so long a time, solving the practical problems of the day, naturally felt in touch with the spirit of his times and was distinctly modern always in opposition to archæology or research work in its adaptation to modern conditions, and always standing for classic principles in architectural design.

The correspondence and controversy given in this book between McKim, Burnham nad Bishop Satterlee regarding the adoption of the Gothic style for the Washington Cathedral reveals McKim as a man of strong convictions. Burnham and he fought with the church authorities, more especially McKim; both endeavored to persuade them to build a classic cathedral rather than Gothic. They both failed however—the church being more governed by prejudice and association than by the appeal of reason. Their letters were most interesting and should have produced an effect. Their contention was that the church should abide by the traditions of our immediate forefathers rather than to follow the sentimental association of mediæval art inappropriate to our time and the expression of an entirely different age. McKim contended that there was not the same appeal for us to return to Gothicism, the art of mediæval times, that existed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for the return of the architects of that period to the classic forms of Rome and Greece. This was the period of the revival of learning in literature as well as in art.

Mr. Burnham's most distinguished service was perhaps his contribution to town planning. The very fine drawings of the future plan of Chicago with their illustrations in the book show his skill in this direction. Again, he was of great service as chairman on the art commission in the development of the Washington plan. Mr. Moore, his biographer, has taken his place as chairman. He is the lay member of this commission, surrounded by six artists of national reputation.

No one could have been better fitted to pay this splendid tribute to a man of Mr. Burnham's character.

Simmons's caricature of Burnham and Frank Millet, who were associated in the effort to secure a better architectural effect at Harvard.

Wartime Tale of Two Cities by Husband and Wife

PARIS DAYS AND LONDON NIGHTS. By Alice Ziska Snyder and Milton Valentine Snyder. E. P. Dutton & Co.

GOOD letters are always good reading, and here is a fat book filled with day-by-day memoranda of human life in Paris and London during a period in the war of which no details were printed at the time, at the beginning of the year 1918—when Big Bertha was bombarding Paris and the Gothas were spilling showers of bombs upon London. The joint authors are a correspondent of THE SUN, who was ordered to London, and his wife, who stayed on in Paris through three months of desperate fighting only a few miles from the gates. Yet the spirit of the French people was reflected in the gallantry of this woman, the wife of an American correspondent, who became so infused with the simple faith of the French people that "they should not pass" that she used to turn over in bed and fall asleep between the heavy punctuation of the guns. Her husband's letters from London are proportionately vivid and interesting, but in the fortunes of war things fall out strangely. This man, assigned to his important work, has to write of business and functions, while his wife, fortunately thrown into the intense reality of nearness to the fighting, tells in her letters to him of hospital work which wrings the heart, yet warms it with the same sympathy which filled her as she worked like a scrubwoman in her delicate responsibility as "historian" in the French hospitals, ten and fifteen hours a day, assisting in the work of caring for the wounded. The wife's letters are packed with the details of hospital work and enlivened with many of the wonderful outcroppings of the comic spirit which often shine out in the midst of suffering and almost in the presence of death. Her high spirit and unfailing pluck are brilliantly in evidence.

One of Mr. Snyder's letters tells of London under the Zeps; Mrs. Lena Gilbert Ford, the author of "Keep the Home Fires Burning," was the first American killed in the raids on London. Of the streets at raid time he writes:

"On the previous night (to Mrs. Ford's death) I was at the theatre when the warning was given. Coming out into the darkness one's eyes instinctively sought the sky. The heavens were criss-crossed with great pencils of light streaming upward from the searchlights located in the London suburbs and in the city itself. I started counting them and had reached more than twenty when the rays in the southern part hesitated and then all centred on one spot, which seemed to be just over Leicester square, where I was walking. Simultaneously the barrage broke loose; it was very heavy, indicating the guns were quite near. The other searchlights promptly focused on the same spot, then swept the sky surrounding it. . . . Our seeking refuge in London is not so picturesque as in Paris. In this hotel there is no nightly pilgrimage to the cellar of guests arrayed in whatever garments they can clutch first.

"Yesterday I saw an unexpectedly and unexpected dramatic incident in the House of Commons. Lloyd George completely lost his head when pressed by the Opposition, which is growing stronger, for an answer to a certain question. His reply brought forth an outburst not only from his opponents, but from a large number of his own followers. The Prime Minister for a time could not control the House."

Again he writes:

"After getting through my work I got a taste of air and sunshine, went to Buckingham Palace to see the parade of women war workers, between three and four thousand in line, representing all branches of endeavor. They made a colorful picture; the munition workers wore tunics and trousers of a cream shade, while girls working in factories where cartridges and fuses were loaded wore similar costumes of red." . . . Every Saturday there is a drill at Kensington by young men just under the military age, among them the Boy Scouts. . . . There were thousands of them. Many American soldiers were watching. According to their accounts, the ocean is covered with our transports loaded with troops. They all seemed keen to get to France "where the big doings are going on."

Indeed, France was a much more vivid place, with its "big doings," and Mrs. Snyder's letters, often merely a list of a day's duties, contain illuminating details. The contrasts are frequently amusing, as they have been packed away in this fascinating record. For instance, Mr. Snyder had just written that he had to go without his dinner to get to a theatre where the performance began early, and afterward went ravening across to the Trocadero restaurant for a good supper, but he could only get "some eggs, a piece of cheese and a sample of rhubarb tart." On the same page Mrs. Snyder remarks:

"We had another noisy day yesterday. At five minutes to 2 a grenade factory blew up, and Paris had the shaking of its life. Mrs. S., Florence H. and I were peacefully drinking coffee in the hall after lunch when there came a thundering noise, a shivering of breaking glass, another shock and still another and again the shattering of panes all around. It seemed much worse than the worst air raid. In two minutes the hall of the St. James was filled with all the inhabitants of the hotel in various stages of fright. Florence rushed to the door—the true instinct born of California earthquake experience; Mrs. S. flew crying for her husband. I am glad to tell you that I did not move from my seat on the couch and that the long ash on my cigarette remained intact. Aside from a few windows, our hotel did not suffer much, but the Avenue de l'Opera will keep scores of glaziers busy for days; the Boulevard Malesherbes suffered greatly; there were many casualties." Mr. Snyder's letters show great concern for his wife's safety, but she smiles back: "Don't worry about me. I am perfectly safe and not afraid. There isn't a shell or bomb yet made that is ticketed with my name."

When the correspondent visited Birmingham he found more in his three days' stay to write about than in weeks in London. In the Birmingham munition area were made the smallest and largest and all intermediate sizes of war munitions, and their component parts, from tiny springs for the fuses in the noses of shells to the most powerful guns, the heaviest tanks and all sorts of airplanes and dirigibles, and all the explosives. And the most striking thing he noticed was the influx of women. In some twenty plants were from 150,000 to 200,000 persons, four-fifths of them women. They did all sorts of men's work except that requiring unusual strength or years of experience. And in "repetition work," *i. e.*, making the same thing hundreds of times, they excelled.

The spirit of battle evidently entered into Mrs. Snyder in Paris. In one place she writes: "Miss A—— is beginning to get cold feet [this was after the Good Friday massacre by the long range gun], and I expect she will follow the V——'s example and decamp in a few days. And yet she is supposed to be 'on the job,' and workers of her kind are signed for a certain time and are supposed to take the good with the bad. I know nothing on earth would make me leave any post: guns, gas, fear of approaching Germans. I'd stick, and I wouldn't care what sort of medicine I was forced to take at the end. Am I a fool, or aren't these just the plain ordinary duties of a worker in these warlike days?" And she goes on to speak of the state of spiritual exaltation which develops when danger is believed to threaten. She finds it well put by Miss May Sinclair in "The Tree of Heaven." Says she: "It has to do with absolute reality. With God. It hasn't to do with having courage; it's another state of mind altogether. You're not ashamed of it next day. It isn't excitement; I'm not excited. It isn't a tingling of the nerves; they don't tingle. It's all curiously quiet and steady. Your body and your nerves aren't in it at all. Doesn't it look as if danger were the point of contact with reality, and death the closest point? Actually you lay hold on eternal life, and you know it."

This is a book of singularly vivid quality. No more fascinating record of war work could be imagined. Its realism is alive.